

# Appendix: Connectors and modifiers

The presentation of information in English is greatly helped by the correct use of connectors and modifiers. Whenever you are in doubt about the most appropriate form to use – for instance, when writing a composition – use the examples below as a guide. Whenever you come across any of the phrases listed below in the course of your reading, note how they are used to develop and link paragraphs. For exercises on their use, see *Book 3*.

## 1 Appearance and Reality

The establishment of facts usually appears in contrast to appearance, what appears to be true, or what is commonly but incorrectly believed to be true. Look at this sentence:

**At first sight (on the face of it)** connectors may seem unnecessary, but **in fact** they are essential to the development of an argument in good modern English.

The same sentence can be written with the use of adverbs as modifiers:

Connectors are **apparently** unnecessary to the development of an argument in good modern English but they are **really (actually)** essential.

Stronger forms of **in fact** for establishing contrast are **the fact is that . . .** and **the fact of the matter is that . . .**

The aeroplane may appear to be a modern conception but **the fact of the matter is that** Leonardo da Vinci designed a flying machine five hundred years ago.

**As a matter of fact** has the same meaning, but carries the idea that the listener or reader may be surprised to hear it:

It is not the first time I have met the Duke. **As a matter of fact**, he was in the same class as I was at school.

**In practice** is almost always used in contrast to **in theory** or **in principle**, and means 'when carried out in a real situation':

These ideas are all very well **in theory**, but will they work **in practice**?

**In principle** I have nothing against the proposal, but I am still not convinced that it will work **in practice**.

**In effect** is close to **in fact** in meaning and usage; it implies 'for practical purposes'; an alternative form is **to all intents and purposes**:

Officially we are still an independent company but **in effect** we belong to Exports Ltd, because they own most of the shares.

**Indeed** is used with the meaning of **in fact** or 'as you may imagine' but as a continuation of a previous statement, not as a contrast:

We expected an improvement in the situation, and **indeed**, things have turned out as we expected.

## 2 Developing an Argument (Sequence)

Most people develop a complex argument by making a series of points. This can be done numerically – **first, second, third** – but the following phrases are most commonly used:

Point 1: **In the first place, To begin with, To start with, First of all.** **For one thing** is more conversational, and may suggest that the speaker is still thinking of his reasons and has not listed them in his mind.

Point 2: **Secondly, In the second place.** These lead the reader to expect further reasons.

**In addition to that** tends to be used for the second and final reason.

**Apart from that, Moreover** (more formal) and **What is more** (conversational) indicate second reasons of a rather different kind, but tending towards the same conclusion:

I am not sure whether we really need a second garage. **Apart from that**, we must take the cost into consideration.

**Besides** raises a second, conclusive point which often makes the first reason seem irrelevant:

I am not sure whether we really need a second garage. **Besides**, we can't afford it.

Final Point: **Finally, Lastly.**

**Above all**, indicating that the last point is the most important.

**In the last resort** suggests 'if everything else has failed' or 'if all other arguments fail to convince':

Of course, they may not accept any of these reasons for negotiation. **In the last resort**, we would have to use force.

Conclusion (not the last point, but a summary of all of them):

**In conclusion, To sum up.** These indicate to the reader that you have reached this stage of the argument.

**Taking everything into account, All things considered, All in all.** These indicate that you are making a balanced judgement of all the points raised, whether they form a consistent list or not.

**In brief, in short, in a word** (the last two more conversational). These indicate that you are going to summarise the points made briefly, and should only be used if that is the case:

**In brief**, we have no alternative to this course of action.

## 3 Developing an Argument (Example)

**For example, for instance, A case in point is . . .** The last normally introduces an extended example ('a case') to illustrate the point made.

## 4 Developing an Argument (Contrast)

When people can see points both for and against an argument, they tend to modify their first statement by placing another in contrast. This can be done in a simple sentence, using **but** or in a sentence using **although** or **in spite of** for greater effect, emphasising that the second consideration is more important than the first.

His argument is interesting **but** it does not convince me.

**Although** his argument is interesting, it does not convince me.

**In spite of** the strength of his argument, it does not convince me.

Reservations about an initial statement are most frequently expressed in written argument with the following connectors: **However, Nevertheless, All the same, At the same time**:

The argument put forward in this article is an interesting one.

**However**, it is not altogether convincing, because . . .

**Yet** can be used in the same way as a stronger form of **but** without the comma that must always follow the other expressions.

**After all** means 'in spite of all other considerations'. It tends to suggest a conclusive negative to arguments previously presented.

These arguments are interesting but not convincing. **After all**, similar measures have been attempted in the past without success.

## 5 Developing an Argument (Balance)

While the phrases used for argument by contrast tend to throw the emphasis on the second point, the following maintain a balance.

**On the one hand . . . on the other hand.** In this case, the writer is neutral.

**On the other hand** is frequently used alone, simply to put forward an alternative point of view, without favouring it:

Businessmen will no doubt welcome the Government's decision to restore some nationalised industries to private enterprise; the unions, **on the other hand**, fear that it will lead to greater unemployment.

A balanced argument can be presented in a single sentence by the use of **while** – see the first sentence of this section.

## 6 Developing an Argument (Cause and Effect)

The following phrases indicate the reasons why an action has taken place or is proposed:

**Because of . . ., Owing to . . .**

**Because of** the world situation at present, we do not think it advisable for the company to proceed with this project.

**Due to** should, strictly speaking, be used as a complement:

Our decision not to proceed is **due to** the world situation.

Having explained the reason(s) for an action, we can continue the presentation of an argument with **For this reason, For these reasons**. Note that **For one reason or another** suggests that we do not know the reasons:

**For one reason or another**, the Government has decided to raise the tax on red wine, but not on white.

**Therefore** and **thus** indicate the logical continuation or conclusion of an argument.

In concluding a logical argument based on cause and effect we can employ the following:

**As a result, Consequently, In consequence.**

## 7 Expressing Personal Opinion

The most common general phrases to indicate a personal, as distinct from a general, opinion are: **In my opinion, In my view, As I see it, To my mind.** The last two are more often found in conversation.

**Personally** emphasises the individual opinion, often in contrast to that of the majority:

A lot of people believe such statements. **Personally**, I think they are nonsense.

**As far as I am concerned** means 'in so far as the matter affects me' and is less likely to appear in written argument than in such contexts as:

They can do what they like, **as far as I am concerned**. I don't care (It's not my business).

**For my part** is similar in meaning, though it tends to stress contrast, like **personally**:

I do not know what their decision will be. **For my part**, I would be happy to forget the whole business.

## 8 Modifying what is said or written

There are many ways in which we modify statements, limiting their meaning or in some cases pointing to specific circumstances in which they are correct.

- a) Expressing truth in general terms though not in all circumstances:

**In general, As a rule, As a general rule, On the whole, In the main, For the most part.**

- b) Indicating that the statement is only partly correct: **To some extent, To a certain extent, Up to a point, In a way, In a sense.** The last indicates a limitation in interpretation:

I agree with you **in a sense** (if the words mean one of the possible interpretations that could be placed on them).

- c) Indicating a limitation in the speaker's responsibility for the statement:  
**As far as I know, To the best of my knowledge.**

**For all I know** suggests ignorance:

I have no idea where they are. **For all I know**, they may be in the south of France.

- d) Indicating that the responsibility for the statement lies with someone else:  
**According to . . . , By all accounts** (indicating that the opinion is generally held).

- e) Limiting the validity of a statement:

**In these circumstances** (but not necessarily in others).

**At least** (commonly used for avoiding responsibility):

The Government has no intention of raising taxes. **At least**, that is what they say. (I am only repeating what I have heard.)

**At any rate** is used in the same way.

**As it is, Things being as they are** (= 'as the situation is at present', but not in ideal circumstances).

## 9 Intensifying the statement

- a) By making it in such a way that the reader is expected to believe it is common knowledge:  
**Clearly, Obviously, Of course, Needless to say, As everyone knows.**

- b) By drawing attention to a particular aspect or group of circumstances:  
**In particular.**  
Here, **especially** is commonly used within the sentence; also **above all** can be used:

The new law has caused a great deal of hardship, **especially** among the poor.

- c) By referring to a more noticeable example of the same thing:  
**let alone.**

They are incapable of organising themselves properly, **let alone** running the country.

We use **not to mention** in a similar way, usually by referring to specific things or people:

Society as a whole has suffered from the effects of the assassination, **not to mention** the family of the victim.

## 10 Rephrasing a statement

**In other words, That is to say.**

## 11 Referring to someone or something

**As regards . . . With regard to . . . , In this connection.**

**As far as . . . is concerned**

**For that matter** suggests an additional reference to the same point:

Our customers abroad have not shown much interest in the new model, and **for that matter**, neither have people here.

**As for . . .** tends to imply lack of interest or contempt for the person or argument in question:

**As for Jones**, I do not think we need to take his opinions into account.

## 12 Suggesting that further discussion will serve no purpose

**In any case** (= 'whatever happens', 'whatever the facts are')

**At all events** (= 'whether that is true or not')

**Anyway** is used as an equivalent, usually in conversation.